Proudly We Hail— Flag's Still There

24 Oct 1965

By Shirley Chatwin
Tribune Correspondent

HAILSTONE, Wasatch County — It's a little sad, the "mystery flag of Hailstoe."

And it is a most unusual American Flag.

It has been there — high on a cliff above U.S. 40 some 10 miles north of Heber — since before most area residents can remember, proudly proclaiming the patriotism of its original maker.

Flat Rock

It is painted on a large flat rock on an unnamed foothill peak, and for years was regularly repainted and cared for at the risk of life and limb of the person hanging over the cliff on ropes to do the job.

Residents believe it may have first been painted by Benny Norris, original owner of the property. One local resident, Guy Duke, now 74, recalls that the flag has been there as long as he can remember.

Another long-time resident, Hi Cummings, recalls Mr. Norris telling of the first painting and how the painter injured a rattlesnake sunning on a nearby ledge. It glided away before the painting was finished.

Hang Over

Other later painters of the flag were Harry Mayo and Walt Halliday, who hung over the cliff on ropes for the job. Mrs. Isabelle Bawm took over the duty of keeping the flag freshly painted, hiring men to do the job until her death in 1952.

But now the great rock flag is somewhat sad. Since that time, it has been taken for granted, but uncared for.

It is fading rapidly under the onslaught of sun and weather.

Soon it may disappear as a colorful reminder, a pleasant sight.

Heat Waves

It will no longer seem to flutter in the summer heat waves.

And even though taken for granted by many now, it may soon leave a void — a void in the hearts of many when they casually glance up and find that the flag is not still there.

From Bertha Baum
3-23-88

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PROUDLY WE HAIL--------- OCTOBER 24, 1965

FLAG'S STILL THERE

BY SHIRLEY CHATWIN, TRIBUNE CORRESPONDENT

HAILSTONE, WASATCH COUNTY -- IT'S A LITTLE SAD, THE "MYSTERY FLAG OF HAILSTONE."

AND IT IS A MOST UNUSUAL AMERICAN FLAG.

IT HAS BEEN THERE -- HIGH ON A CLIFF ABOVE U.S. 40 SOME 10 MILES NORTH OF HEBER -- SINCE BEFORE MOST AREA RESIDENTS CAN REMEMBER, PROUDLY PROCLAIMING THE PATRIOTISM OF IT'S ORIGINAL MAKER.

FLAT ROCK

IT IS PAINTED ON A LARGE FLAT ROCK ON AN UNNAMED FOOTHILL PEAK, AND FOR YEARS WAS REGULARLY REPAINTED AND CARED FOR AT THE RISK OF LIFE AND LIMB OF THE PERSON HANGING OVER THE CLIFF ON ROPES TO DO THE JOB.

RESIDENTS BELIEVE IT MAY HAVE FIRST BEEN PAINTED BY BENNY NORRIS,(*) ORIGINAL OWNER OF THE PROPERTY. ONE LOCAL RESIDENT, GUY DUKE, NOW 74, RECALLS THAT THE FLAG HAS BEEN THERE AS LONG AS HE CAN REMEMBER.

ANOTHER LONG-TIME RESIDENT, HI CUMMINGS, RECALLS MR. NORRIS TELLING OF THE FIRST PAINTING AND HOW THE PAINTER INJURED A RATTLESNAKE SUNNING ON A NEARBY LEDGE. IT GLIDED AWAY BEFORE THE PAINTING WAS FINISHED.

OTHER LATER PAINTERS OF THE FLAG WERE HARRY MAYO AND WALT HALLIDAY, WHO HUNG OVER THE CLIFF ON ROPES FOR THE JOB. MRS. ISABELLE BAWM TOOK OVER THE DUTY OF KEEPING THE FLAG FRESHLY PAINTED, HIRING MEN TO DO THE JOB UNTIL HER DEATH IN 1952. HARRY C. MAYO WAS ONE OF THOSE SHE HIRED.

BUT NOW THE GREAT ROCK FLAG IS SOMEWHAT SAD. SINCE THAT TIME, IT HAS BEEN TAKEN FOR GRANTED, BUT UNCARED FOR.

IT IS FADING RAPIDLY UNDER THE ONSLAUGHT OF SUN AND WEATHER.

SOON IT MAY DISAPPEAR AS A COLORFUL REMINDER, A PLEASANT SIGHT. IT WILL NO LONGER SEEM TO FLUTTER IN THE SUMMER HEAT WAVES.

AND EVEN THOUGH TAKEN FOR GRANTED BY MANY NOW, IT MAY SOON LEAVE A VOID -- A VOID IN THE HEARTS OF MANY WHEN THEY CASUALLY GLANCE UP AND FIND THAT THE FLAG IS NOT STILL THERE.

NOTE: ORVAL SWEAT'S GRANDSON AND RUBY SWEAT'S SON, SCOTT FLITTON AND WIFE MARY PAINTED THE FLAG IN 1973 AND AGAIN IN 1985. LUKE DENNISON HELPED THEM BY HOLDING A ROPE TO LET THEM DOWN OVER THE CLIFF. THEY WERE THE LAST ONES TO REPAINT THE FLAG.

(*) SEE "STATE OF THE PEOPLE" BY STEVE HALE FOR MORE DETAIL